

1-1-2002

Editors' Notes

Stuart Love
slope@pepperdine.edu

D'Esta Love
dlove@pepperdine.edu

Virgil Fry

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Recommended Citation

Love, Stuart; Love, D'Esta; and Fry, Virgil (2002) "Editors' Notes," *Leaven*: Vol. 10: Iss. 3, Article 2.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol10/iss3/2>

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Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

For some time, your editors have wanted to publish an issue of *Leaven* on pastoral care that featured Christian ministry in moments of crisis. We chose Virgil Fry to guest edit this issue for several reasons. (1) Virgil is trained to do this kind of ministry. He is also dedicated to providing compassionate support to the seriously ill, their families and caregivers, and to being an educational resource for crisis ministries. (2) He is Executive Director of Lifeline Chaplaincy (www.lifelinechaplaincy.org) in Houston, Texas through which position he ministers to people in crisis. (3) He teaches and trains students for pastoral work of this kind at Pepperdine University and Abilene Christian University. (4) He is conversant with others in the field. We are grateful that he has taken on this task of ministry for *Leaven*!

When we search for biblical paradigms of ministry in times of crisis, we soon realize how much God's servants in the Old and New Testaments ministered to others and to God's people in contexts of suffering. On nearly every page of the gospels we witness Jesus ministering to others when times were tough. We also witness Paul as he carried with him the burden and anxiety of the needs of young churches. With these thoughts in mind, we have asked Virgil Fry to introduce this timely and much needed issue.



Crisis is an inevitable part of human existence. The Bible begins and ends with theological and practical implications of humanity grappling with crisis. We, like our biblical forbears, seek a faith-informed understanding of suffering. We question the purpose of pain, we cry out at injustice, we shudder at the powerful depths of despair that accompany loss. We, like all humans, crave the words and presence of God to soothe our inner spirits with comfort and with understanding.

This issue of *Leaven* focuses on the biblical, theological, historical, and practical makeup of suffering and crisis. Particularly discussed in this issue is the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York, September 11, 2001. This issue also views other catastrophic events—some personal, some ecclesiastical, some global—within the framework of scholarly, reflective, biographical contributors. Each writer asks the reader to look at crisis as more than an event calling for reflexive survival behavior, but also as a vital part of one's spiritual journey.

Virgil Fry introduces the topic of crisis ministry through his discussion of loss and grief, and calls for church life to include the articulation of and sharing in losses. Lynn Mitchell offers a biblical overview of suffering, lament, and regrouping, and shares personal moments of pain that were endured through the strength of this biblical underpinning. Sheila Bost provides a poignant insight into her difficult role as chronic illness survivor, and the supportive and not-so-supportive care she encountered along the way. Douglas Skinner digs into the fascinating wells of the history of Restoration leaders whose personal sufferings and public proclamations continue to shape modern Churches of Christ and Christian Church theology. Dan Blazer examines the seeming antagonism of two major forces in defining and coping with crisis: Western scientific thought and Christian faith. Amy Bost Henegar interviews Randy Harris and Ira Jolivet, two university Bible scholars, on the issue of theodicy in relation to the response of churches to the 9/11 event. Glenn Boyd speaks from a pastoral counselor's perspective on the richness of caring for one

another through the profoundly simple act of agape-listening. **Janice Hughes** weaves a powerful, gripping narrative of a serene respite morphing into a critical life-and-death struggle for her husband, Richard. **Lerrill White** offers a glimpse into the real-life ministry laboratory for chaplains who daily are forced to translate lofty theological principles into down-to-earth reflections as they encounter the crises of hospital patients, families, and staff.

Charles Siburt supplies a useful biographical resource list of books that address the topic of crisis, along with those that provide reflections and responses to suffering. Four insightful book reviews are offered:

David Pillar on Crabb's *Shattered Dreams*, **Debbie Pauls** on Doka's *Living With Grief*, **Mark Manassee** on Yancey's *Where Is God When It Hurts?*, and **Jenny Newsom Bufford** on Walton's *When There Are No Words*.

VIRGIL FRY

Your editors close with two announcements. First, this is the final issue for which Krystin D. Higgins will serve as copy editor of *Leaven*. She has accepted a ministry opportunity as the interim youth minister for the Camarillo Church of Christ, Camarillo, California. We will miss her excellent work! But we are grateful for the opportunity this new task provides Krystin! Second, we are pleased to announce that Tammy Ditmore will be our copy editor. Tammy brings a great deal of writing and editing experience to this task. We are most grateful that she has accepted this responsibility. Please note the changes on the inside front cover of our next issue.

Finally, beginning with the first issue of this year, *Leaven* will now be abstracted by Brad Dudley for *Religious and Theological Abstracts*. We thank Brad for his work, and we are grateful for the step forward this affords *Leaven* and our writers.

D'ESTA LOVE

STUART LOVE

